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SUBJECT: PROGRESS REPORT: THE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY RESPONSE (GFSR)

REF: STATE 055304

11. SUMMARY: USAID/Liberia is pleased to respond to reftel with this brief progress report on the \$10 million Supplemental funds received to enhance Liberia's food security. The funds have been programmed to build on the success of the existing USAID Liberia's agricultural programs and to launch a new activity in the value chain aimed at scaling-up the production, processing and marketing of essential staple foods in Liberia. The goal is to make Liberia food self-sufficient by 2015.

12. Progress on each component of the Global Food Security Response (GFSR) is as follows:

1A. Component 1 - Promoting Sound Market-Based Principles.

Obligation and Sub-Obligations

The \$10 million was obligated under the existing Economic Growth Assistance Agreement with Liberia. A sub-obligation was made to extend the USAID funded activity providing technical support to the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) through Associates in Rural Development (ARD), as the implementing partner. This activity is assisting the Government of Liberia's agriculture sector by strengthening institutional capacity of the MOA to efficiently implement programs and pursue needed reforms. The program provided a forum for enhanced donor coordination and as a result has leveraged more than \$ 40 million in non-USG funding for agricultural sector.

Progress to date includes the procurement of 50 metric tons of foundation rice seed from the West Africa Rice Development Association (WARDA) in order to establish a viable seed bank system in Liberia. The 50 MT of foundation seed is expected to produce 54,000 MT of certified rice seed, which is sufficient to cultivate about 1,350,000 hectares of rice fields. The seeds are expected to arrive by mid-June and be ready for this year's planting season. The seed bank will ensure a sustained flow of improved rice seed in three years to support productive farming enterprises. In addition, technical assistance will be provided to transfer improved technologies, strengthen institutions, provide extension services and human capital required to manage a functional seed system.

B & C. Components 2 and 3 - Increasing Agricultural Productivity and Alleviating Transportation, Distribution and Supply-Chain Bottlenecks. These two components complement one another.

Obligation and Sub-Obligations: Obligation remains the same as stated above. Sub-Obligation for the bulk of the supplemental funds will go towards supporting a value chain for staple food crop diversification (rice, cassava, vegetables) and marketing activity. The target is to improve the lives of more than 25,000 farmers by introducing improved crop varieties and addressing key constraints that inhibit increased production and access to markets. The project will therefore rehabilitate 10 market buildings and 100km of farm-to-market roads. Capacity of local agricultural organizations/associations within the value chain will be strengthened. More than 25,000 farmers will receive short term training on various topics including agri-business development and management. The project will also facilitate extension of commercial banking services to 100 rural agri-businesses and promote the formation of 3 global development alliances in staple and cash crops.

The supplemental funds will also help Liberia to meet 80-85% of its

planting material requirement for the staple diet, rice, in the next three years. Providing key inputs such as quality seed would deliver an immediate productivity boost increasing rice yield from less than 1.5 MT to more than 3 MT per hectare through the use of improved seed and other improved cultural practices such as integrated pest management (IPM), water management, as well as technologies transfer to farmers through training.

D. Actions Being Taken to Advance the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Process. The MOA received a grant of \$45,000 to hire an international consultant to coordinate and develop a CAADP agenda for Liberia. The CAADP was launched in Liberia on 23 March 2009 with government and stakeholders representatives in attendance. Several consultative meetings with farmers are being held to inform and present CAADP framework for agricultural growth and development. It is anticipated that with the current financial and technical assistance provided, Liberia will achieve the CAADP compact by July 2009.

E. Actions Being Taken at Post to Coordinate USG Programs: USAID Liberia is already closely coordinating and planning program activities to build synergies with the planned activities of the USAID regional office in Ghana and the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Liberia. USAID is also working in close collaboration with other relevant institutions, such as, the national research institute Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI), West Africa Rice Development Association (WARDA) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

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